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THE HOMES OF AMERICA.

V.

I.

CEDARMERE, SUMMER RESIDENCE OF MR. WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

THERE are many charming and some "stately homes" in America, but none which appeal more directly to the sense of the beautiful than that of William Cullen Bryant, at Roslyn, Long Island. It is cast within a nook of exquisite loveliness, upon the hilly shore of Hempstead Bay; and the mansion, gardens,

grounds, and distant fields, all show how perfectly Nature and Art may be wedded in one harmonious whole. Cedarmere is like the finished and impressive poems of its master.

The house is nearly a century old, having been built by a Quaker in 1787. Mr. Bryant purchased the property about thirty years ago, and it has since undergone great transformations. It is a large, square structure, with an old-fashioned gable-roof, modern bay-windows, attractive verandas, and antique balconies. It is so embowered with handsome, rare, and stately trees, and so artisti-



Summer Residence of Mr. William Cullen Bryant.

cally ornamented with honeysuckle, codea, clematis, and other aspiring vines, that but a mere suggestion of its style can be obtained from the approach.

The entrance is in the centre, and a broad hall lined with choice pictures extends quite to the rear of the building, where a quaint, old-time door, cut open in the middle, leads to a smooth, velvety lawn, decorated with mounds of bright-coloured flowers. The staircase is of the pattern in vogue before the Revolution, and teems with historic associations.

The parlour, a large, restful apartment, with two graceful bay-windows commanding a long stretch of out-of-door beauties, is upon the left, and the dining-room upon the right of the entrance. In the former are two ancient cabinets built deep into the wall, one upon each side of an antiquarian fireplace, with tiled jams, brass andirons, and massive hearthstone; they contain valuable curiosities and interesting heirlooms, which are treasured with scrupulous care. The furniture is so tastefully blended that no one feature stands out prominently before the mind; but the soft cush-

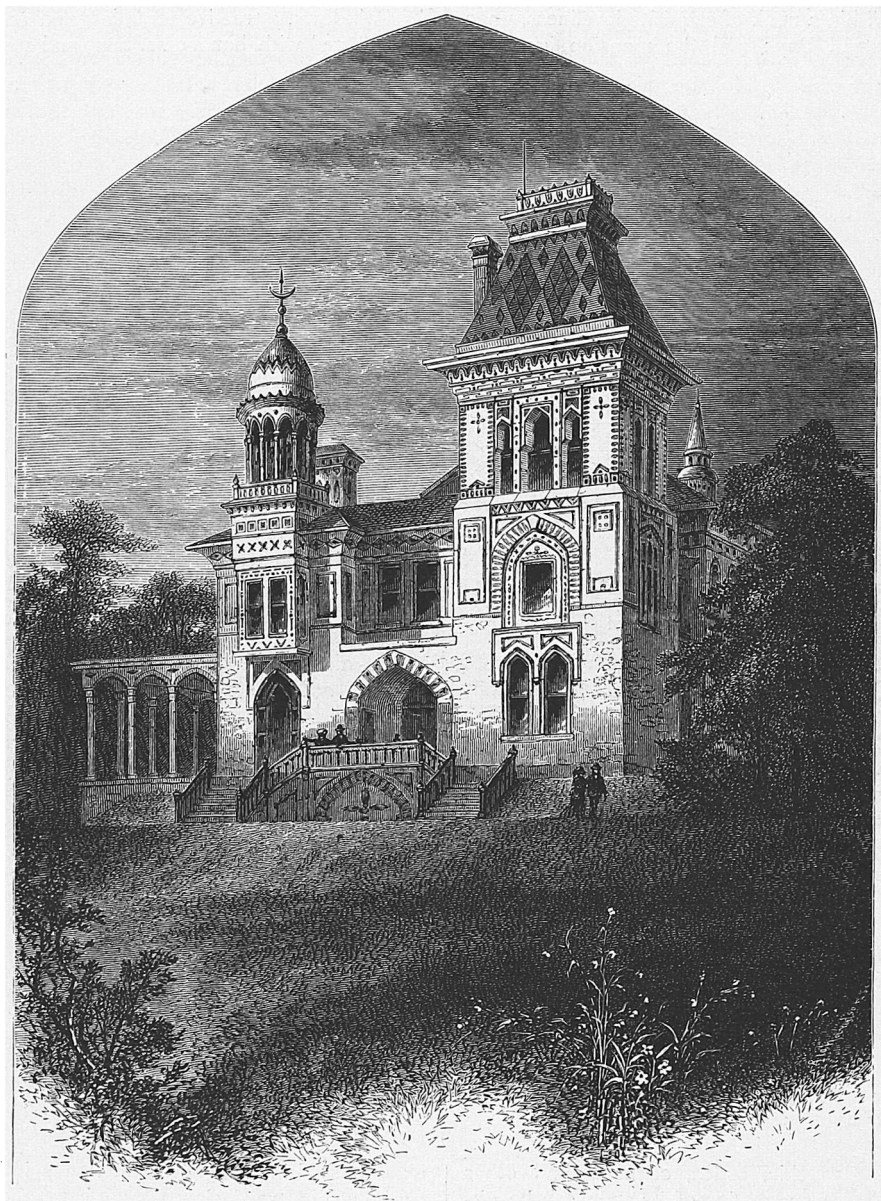
ions, dressed in cool chintz, the fine paintings and engravings, and fresh-cut flowers, declare the perfect embodiment of personal comfort, and the refinement of high culture. The appointments of the dining-room are in the same rare good taste. Pictures and books and flowers occupy every spare place, and seem exactly fitted to the space they occupy. A broad bay-window overlooks a magnificent rhododendron, and a bit of bewitching landscape beyond, while a smaller window upon the eastern side reveals glimpses of a leafy and picturesque hillside.

The poet's library and study-room is in the northwestern corner of the mansion. It is separated from the parlour by an immense forefatherly chimney. The original fireplace has disappeared in favour of a patent fire-frame, where curling flames dance merrily in chilly weather; but the Dutch tiles, with their Scriptural references, remain. The room is of the same size as the parlour, and it has two bay-windows courting the sunshine and the magnolia-shades, with patches of water-prospect, and romantic and wooded undulations upon the opposite side of the bay. The entire walls to

the ceiling are lined with books. Nearly all that genius has created or industry achieved in the way of letters has found its way to these shelves. A large library-table occupies the centre of the room, and is strewn with periodicals and literary novelties. In the western bay-window stands a small writing-desk, which, like the pen of the poet and the scholar, seems to have caught inspiration from the ceaseless hum of rustling foliage and the poesy of birds. Pictures and choice engravings upon easels, coaxing arm-chairs, and brilliant rugs, add to the subtle charms of this incomparable room, from which has emanated so much of the best thought in our language.

The upper rooms are large and luxurious, and nearly all of them open upon balconies, commanding views which are a perpetual fascination. Of the guest-chamber, directly over the library, a recent writer has drawn this brief picture: "Easy-chairs and sofas, curtains in daintiest chintz, matching the oak furniture, which appear to be the spontaneous product of the carpet, a little bookcase filled, a table before it with inkstand and fancy pen-wiper, and works of Art."

The chief glory of Cedarmere, however, is in its grounds and surroundings. From the house no fences or boundaries can be seen, only vistas of exceeding beauty reaching off to where the



Residence of Mr. Frederick E. Church.

trees and mountains seem to come together, or the water dwindles to a point bridged with overhanging foliage.

A fanciful, artificial lake glimmers from below the house, between which and the bay an irregular embankment has been constructed, which is filled with trees and shrubbery. The Quaker proprietor of Cedarmere, many years ago, gathered the mountain-springs into this basin for the practical purpose of running a small manufacturing establishment, little dreaming that it would be converted into a "joy forever" to the admiring eye. The garden, spreading over an acre, or possibly two, is disposed along the slope between the house and the bay, and is encircled on all sides by grand old trees and luxuriant shrubs. It is filled with the choicest

specimens of floral culture. Here and there fruit-trees of gentle birth and foreign lineage, such as the persimmon, the Portuguese quince, the Chickasaw plum, and the Chinese sand-pear, which decline the associations of a common orchard, flourish in haughty isolation without casting ever a grim shadow among the flowers. Grapes abound. In the lower part of the garden seven or eight varieties are cultivated under glass, and there are at least ten other varieties in different places.

Mr. Bryant is a skilled horticulturist, and in his various and extensive travels has never omitted an opportunity of securing the products of other climes, and experimenting upon their culture at Cedarmere. As a natural result, the garden itself is a remarkable

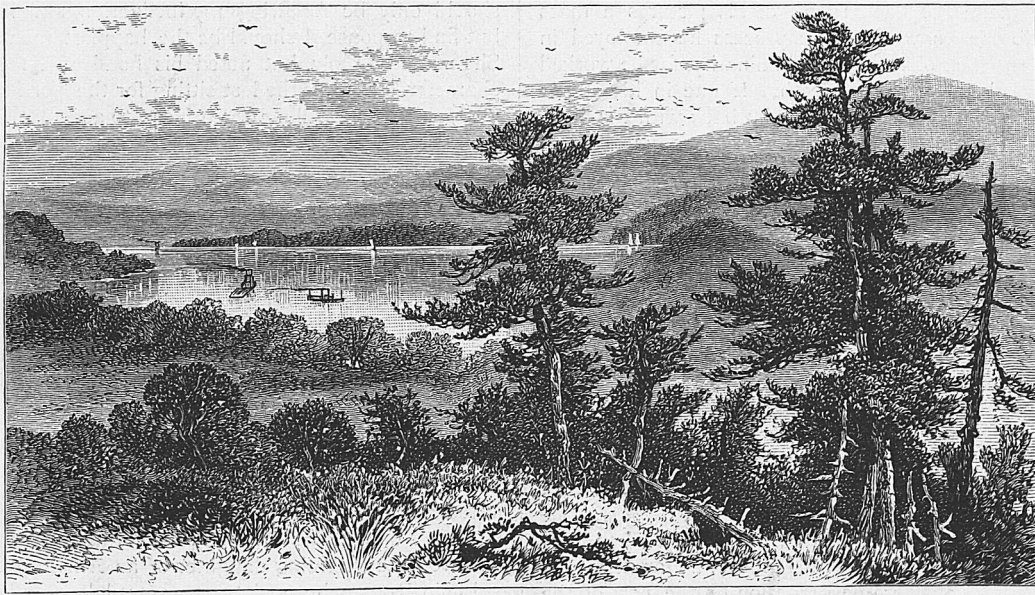
and instructive botanical cyclopædia, as well as a continual artistic surprise.

On the southern edge of an extensive and well-regulated strawberry-patch, near the foot of the slope, is a unique little mill which contains saws and machinery, with power to force water into a reservoir upon the top of the hill. It is nestled in shrubbery and oppressed with vines, and has the outward appearance of a summer-house.

The trees of Cedarmere, to do them justice, would require a special article to themselves. Like the plants, they have been brought from all quarters of the globe. They present a curious combination of natural wildness with artificial planting. Not far from the house stands a Turkish oak, indigenous in the islands of the Archipelago and throughout Greece; and by its side, as if jealous of so much foreign arrogance, sulks an old American oak, with a head broader than the height of its trunk; in the immediate vicinity another member of the oak family offers leaves destitute of flexible points or bristles. In the remote boundaries of Cedarmere are some gigantic natives of hoary age. A huge black walnut, for instance, is some twenty-five feet in circumference, and about one hundred and eighty feet high. It is supposed to be at least one

hundred and seventy years old. It has several branches equal in size to giant trees. Along the road to Glen Cove, Mr. Bryant has formed a sort of belt to his property by planting several thousand European larches—similar to the American hackmatack. One high point of land overlooks even many of the trees, and from it is obtained a magnificent view of the Sound seven miles distant, with the village of the Methodist camping-ground in the intervening space.

It is a walk of miles to visit the various points of interest with which Cedarmere abounds. Cottages, pretty and picturesque, spring upon the rambler from the most unexpected quarters, each presenting a different phase of architecture. There are some eight or ten, all of Mr. Bryant's building, and designed for members of his family, or personal friends. The elegant dwelling of Parke Godwin, Mr. Bryant's son-in-law, is just to the north of his own, hedged in by weeping-willows and stately elms. Fruit, shade, ornamental, and forest trees, are in every part of this vast domain; standing singly, standing in rows, standing in clusters, as if they had been distributed through some convulsion of the elements, with out order or method. And yet the most consummate method is discernible in their arrangement. They become a study the moment



View from the Grounds of Mr. Church's Residence.

it is remembered that the hand of the poet himself planted the greater part of them. And they acquire a sacred charm through the knowledge that from under their shade the gifted Bryant has drawn inspiration for some of his noblest works.

II.

RESIDENCE OF MR. CHURCH, THE ARTIST.

As we have viewed at length the summer home of one of the foremost poets of the land, we can now do no better than to glance at the new residence of one of our most distinguished landscape-painters. On the banks of the Hudson, opposite Catskill, and some three miles south of the city of Hudson, on a hill nearly six hundred feet in elevation, stands the house of Mr. Frederick E. Church. The site for the residence was selected by Mr. Church after a careful study of the river-shores, and commands so many views of varied character and beauty, that here may be almost said to culminate the glories of the Hudson. Here is the grandest and most impressive view of the Catskill Mountains. In the deep valley flows the Hudson River between high and wooded banks. To the south it suddenly broadens to a width of two miles, forming a beautiful lake with picturesque shores. In the distance rise various mountain-chains, including the Highlands at West Point, sixty miles away. Easterly is a long, meadow-like valley forming the base of Blue Hill, a mountain of eight or nine hundred feet elevation, and about two miles distant; beyond is the Taghanic Range,

partly in Connecticut and partly in Massachusetts. At the north the river reappears, divided by Mount Merino; on the east bank lies the city of Hudson; on the west, Athens. A glimpse of the river is seen near Albany, and beyond lie the more southern mountains of Vermont. A variety of hill-forms, and small bodies of water, give striking variety to the great panorama.

The house is built in the Persian style, so far as the climate and the requirements of Western civilisation permitted. The walls, two and a half feet thick, are constructed of some rough stones, which are beautiful in colour, and quarried on the place. The cut-work is partly of light brown-stone and partly of blue-stone. The upper part of the principal tower is constructed of red, yellow, and black bricks, arranged in characteristic patterns. These bricks are introduced elsewhere in the main structure, in order to produce a pleasing variety of colour, as also an effect like mosaic-work. The main doorway, of light brown-stone, has a border of mosaic tiles. The cornices, which are very bold, are richly painted in colours and gold, in designs being conformable to the style of the house. The roofs are covered with green, red, and black slates, arranged in appropriate and elaborate patterns, relieved by a few gilt slates.

The main feature of the interior is a large central court or hall, cruciform, which opens into the various rooms. The picture-gallery, with a ceiling eighteen feet high, permits the introduction of four lofty windows to the north, giving an even and admirable light. The partitions throughout the house are of solid masonry,

and, as the house is fixed on the firm rock, a strength and durability are gained seldom to be found in our domestic architecture.

Mr. Church designed the house in all its details, consulting with Mr. Vaux, the eminent architect. The building is certainly very

unique, and will excite interest as well as approval, if for no other reason than because it is wholly an individual structure, departing distinctly from the types that abound all around us. The grounds are not yet finished in all their details.

THE ROMANCE OF GREAT ARTISTS.*



FAUL REMBRANDT VAN RYM was a man of low origin, of basest stamp of character, but of original genius. He never had anybody for master, and followed in his painting no "school." He married by inclination a young peasant-girl; he himself was the son of a miller, and born in a mill. His wife, Saskia Nylembourg, was his counterpart in character, rather pretty in face, and often served as model for him. He had no taste for the antique in Art, prided himself upon never having been in Italy, and, in order to evade the fault of perspective, of which he knew neither the rules nor principles, he made the background of his pictures a mass of dark colour. No one knows just the process he employed in giving his productions their obscurity and luminarity, for he worked in secret, and guarded his secret in death. If one in his studio walked too near a picture, he would pull him back with the judicious remark that the odour of the colours would produce a headache. He lived meanly, his best repast consisting of dried herring or cheese. His desire for gain was such that he resorted to all sorts of unworthy tricks to raise the value of his pictures and engravings, one time giving out word that he was dead, while he and his wife secretly left Amsterdam. After the death of his wife, Rembrandt's sister came to keep house for him, and so improved his manner of living that his later years bordered upon respectability. Rubens, who had visited his studio once with his young wife, Helen Froment, introduced her with evident pride. Rembrandt pointed to a dowdy woman in a corner, and growled from under his slouched hat, "And that's my old woman!" When Rubens visited him again, Rembrandt ran eagerly towards him and greeted him with, "I'm a widower; the old woman you knew is dead, God be praised!"

Paul Potter, the Flemish animal-painter, fell in love when very young with the pretty daughter of his neighbour, an architect of some distinction. After considerable hesitation on the part of the girl's father, the two were married. But the young wife proved to possess a very great taste for flirtations, and naturally found many adorers. Her husband, greatly occupied in his work, paid little attention to her behaviour, which soon became a matter of public scandal. One day, however, discovering by accident his wife with one of her lovers in a moment of great tenderness, he was inspired with a volcanic idea. Seizing some ropes that lay under his hand, he quickly garroted the two and tied them strongly; then he surrounded them with a network which he had used to protect his horse from flies, and, when thus securely imprisoned, he invited her other adorers to come and regard the two lovers. The punishment, though severe, was effective, and the wife, fully ashamed of her fault, became one of the most faithful of wives; and Potter, who was very indulgent, fully forgave her.

The Hondekoeters, who lived at Utrecht early in the seventeenth century, were famous artists—the grandfather, Gillis, who painted the feathered tribe marvellously, the son Gilbrecht, and the grandson Melchior. The latter became enamoured of a young orphan girl, and begged his father to ask her for him in marriage. Gilbrecht, who was a handsome man, went to fulfil his son's wishes; but the young girl was so impressed with his appearance and manner that she fell in love with him on the spot, and declared that she greatly preferred him to the son! He endeavoured to present to her the more suitable age of his son, &c., but in vain, and he was obliged to retire. The fact that she loved him remained present in his mind, and he resolved to marry her, and did so. He removed his residence, in order that his son should not be daily

annoyed by the sight of the father's domestic bliss. Melchior subsequently married a woman who brought home with her five ugly and quarrelsome sisters, who rendered his home intensely unhappy. He took to drink, and died at fifty-nine.

Jeanne Paul Slingeland, born in 1640, was famous for the length of time it took him to paint a picture. One day, as he was painting the portrait of a widow who was tired of his slowness, she overwhelmed him with reproaches. "It would take me much less time to love you, madame," he replied, "than to paint your portrait. I find so many beauties to render; so many lovely features to imitate, that my pencil is lost in the attempt. On the other hand, I should only be following my inclination, and if my feeling could but find response, I should be the happiest man in all the world." She made no reply, but noted his handsome face and his honest character. During the last sitting for the portrait she said to him, "Would you be willing, mein Herr, to accept the original in payment of the copy?" He said he was quite willing, and did so. The marriage was a happy one. Slingeland died at sixty-one.

Jean Asselyn had a romantic experience while painting the Campagna about Rome. Two lovely pilgrims, passing one day and seeing him at work, approached him to look at his pictures, and praised them. The conversation beginning to take colour, the painter hazarded a direct question, and asked them the cause of their pilgrimage. "We are Germans," replied the youngest. "Father remarried, and our stepmother wished to put us in a convent. We had a horror of that, so we took our jewels and started on this pilgrimage." "But are you not afraid of meeting with some ugly adventurer?" "Oh, no! We are devoted to the goddess Cythere, who will find us each a good husband, and we travel in this confidence." Although Jean was heart-free, he resisted the opportunity of offering himself as a fulfilment of St. Cythere's obligations towards one of them. He afterwards wooed and won the charming daughter of an Antwerp merchant.

Philip Roos, whose pictures are well known in Italy, had great talent for landscape and animal painting. One day, when designing in the country about Rome, Hyacinthe Brandi, who enjoyed at that time a great reputation, rode past in his *carrosse*. Stopping to make the acquaintance of the artist and to look at his designs, he became so pleased with him that he invited him to his house. Next day Roos went, when his witty conversation so amused Brandi that he extended to him a standing invitation to call whenever he chose. As he was leaving he met Signorina Brandi, his host's daughter. She was so beautiful that Roos became hopelessly in love with her on the spot. But he turned away in pain and despair, for the name of Brandi, his wealth, the beauty of his daughter, his country, his religion—everything was against him. One thing, however, was in his favour; he was the handsomest man in Rome. Next day he went to see Brandi again; he found him engaged, but prevailed upon the domestic to allow him to wait. He passed into the garden, looking everywhere, hoping to see the daughter; finally he discovered her standing behind a grated window. Time was short and precious, and he began at once to make her declarations of love by signs, and succeeded far enough to obtain some hopes from *la belle Italienne*. This pantomime courtship endured several days, when the father discovered it, and became furious. He put his child in a convent, and told Roos that he had not reared and educated his daughter for an animal-painter. Roos, who was rapidly amassing fame and fortune, went to the Cardinal Vicar and changed his religion. This public renunciation of his faith made a great *bruit*, and proved very advantageous to the project he had formed. He then declared to the cardinal his love for the beautiful Brandi, and, persuading him that his love was returned, his eminence mentioned the matter to the pope.

* Continued from page 189.